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ABSTRACT

This book provides a constructivist interpretation of developmentally appropriate preschool and kindergarten curriculum, incorporating descriptions of how activities are transformed over time and how children's reasoning is transformed, and placing the interpretation in the context of the play-oriented approach advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The book's introduction argues that NAEYC's criticism of inappropriate "work" in early childhood education has had the effect of giving all work a bad name and that both play and work can engage children's interest, experimentation, and cooperation, and meet the criteria for constructivist activities. Part 1 of the book focuses on theoretical and practical foundations for developing constructivist early childhood curriculum. Parts 2 and 3 offer detailed descriptions of classroom activities and principles of teaching followed by constructivist teachers. Each part begins with an introduction setting the stage for the following chapters, detailing stages in children's reasoning, and presenting general teaching principles. Chapter 1 describes four types of classrooms reflecting different interpretations of the role of play in early childhood education. Chapter 2 defines constructivist education and discusses general principles of teaching. Chapter 3 examines assessment and documentation of learning in constructivist classrooms. Chapter 4 begins the presentation of physical-knowledge activities, presenting classroom activities related to shadows in different types of classrooms. Chapter 5 focuses on musical instrument making as a physical-knowledge activity and provides examples of two types of musical instruments and simple experiments with them. Chapter 6 describes how cooking is typically presented in different classroom types and discusses issues to be resolved before bringing cooking into the classroom. Chapter 7 follows highlights of the process that a teacher and child followed as the child experimented with water draining and the movement of water. Chapter 8 describes the development of geometric

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reasoning in preschoolers through the use of pattern blocks and frames and uses examples from a prekindergarten classroom to illustrate a constructivist approach. Chapter 9 describes group games to teach mathematics in a preschool classroom. Chapter 10 presents the story of two preschoolers' checkers play throughout the school year and describes development in their practice of the rules and in their interpersonal understanding. The book's appendix provides an explanation of the stages in children's reasoning about shadows. (Contains 152 references.) (KB)

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